Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Generally does not this word "at once" mean forthwith?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—Generally it is so. It could be interpreted in another manner also. It depends upon the discretion of the officer. If you look into the Dictionary you will see the meaning "without losing time". But it is not possible in exective matters. And in an executive order like that a discretion is necessary.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Could he not have done it in a proper way so that there might not be any misunderstanding about it?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—He could have done it.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—The Chief Engineer was present at Ernakulam and there was no more trouble. Is his mere presence at Ernakulam a soothing balm for the troubles undergone by the people?

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The Chief Engineer was ready at hand to receive the complaint and pass orders.

Decree-debts due from Agriculturists.

339. **Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.**—Referring to the materials of the last as many years as possible, will the Government be pleased to state the number of the decreed debts, due from agriculturists that amounted to—

(a) ten times and more of the principal.

(b) 9; 8; 7; 6; 5; 4; 3; 2; and 1½ times of the principal;

(c) how far the above were productive loans;

(d) the reasons for (c);

(e) what the Government have been doing to combat the evils indicated above;

(f) what the Government intend to do in the matter?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—(a), (b), (c) and (d). It is not possible to give any definite information on these as it involves the searching of numberless case files which it is not possible to complete before the end of the present meeting.

(e) and (f). An Economic Survey of the State has been started with a view to ascertain the real situation of agriculturists. The question will be considered after the Survey is over.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Could you kindly get it before the next meeting?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—The Government have already addressed the Chief Court in the matter. They have not supplied the information. This information can be got only from the courts.

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Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Can I get it before the next meeting?

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—We will address the Hon'ble Judges of the Chief Court.

Sale of teak to the Anamalais Timber Trust.

340. Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar.—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

1. whether there was a contract by the Anamalais Timber Trust for the purchase of the whole stock of teak from the Government Depot;
2. if so, when;
3. the quantity sold to them;
4. and the rate per candy;
5. the value realised;
6. and the amount of commission paid;
7. if no timber was taken delivery of, what action was taken against them for not acting according to the terms of the contract;
8. owing to the non-compliance of this contract by the Trust, were not Government unable to sell its timber in time and realise its value?

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—(1) There was no contract; but the Trust secured an offer for the stock.

2. In 1107.
3. No timber was sold to them.
4. The offer was at Rs. 37 per candy.
5. In view of answer to (3), no reply is called for.
6. Nil.
7. In view of reply to (1) above, no answer is called for.
8. Since no contract had been entered into, the question does not arise.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar.—What is the difference between a contract and an offer?

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—The contract is a formal agreement. The offer is only an application.

Mr. Paul Mampilli.—Was the offer accepted by the Government?

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—It was accepted by the Government.

Mr. Joseph Pettah.—If an offer is accepted by the other party, does it not become a contract between the two?

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—You call it a contract only when the formal agreement is entered into. It is not so in this case.

Mr. Joseph Pettah.—Is not the offer a formal offer?

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